

The
Dublin Grand Opera Society
1941



STORIES OF THE OPERAS

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"FAUST"

(GOUNOD)

FOUNDED on the first part of Goethe's great drama, "Faust" is a dramatic and fine opera. It opens in the study of the old philosopher, Faust, who, though he has devoted his life to study, is miserable because his advancing age prevents him from still further delving into the secrets of existence. He summons Satan to his aid and the latter appears in the form of Mephistopheles. Mephistopheles promises to give youth and a cavalier, Faust agrees to give beauty to Faust if he will, in return, give him his soul. Faust and the bargain is struck.

Then Mephistopheles shows Faust a vision of the lovely Marguerite, with whom Faust immediately falls in love. He sees Marguerite in the flesh at the village festivities before the soldiers leave for war. But she is jealously guarded by her brother Valentine, who leaves her protected by Martha, her old aunt, when he goes off to war.

It is an easy thing for Mephistopheles to wheedle the old gossip into letting Faust meet Marguerite, who has already been half won by glorious gifts of jewellery which have easily overshadowed the flower gifts of her other lover, Siebel.

The love of Faust and Marguerite blossoms into delightful fulfilment, but their awakening arrives with the return of Valentine from war. The enraged brother hastens to find his sister's betrayer and challenges him to a duel. Faust, however, is unwilling to fight Marguerite's brother, but Mephistopheles directs his sword and Valentine is killed. He dies cursing Marguerite.

This turn of events is too much for the simple country maid, and finding herself shunned by the villagers, her mind becomes unhinged, and she drowns her new-born babe. Thereupon she is imprisoned and sentenced to death.

Faust, having lost his Marguerite, pines for her, and Mephistopheles does his best to distract his attention by showing him many new joys but in the midst of each the face of Marguerite returns to Faust. At last, in desperation, he begs Mephistopheles to take him into Marguerite's prison cell. They go to the prison, but Marguerite sensing the presence of Satan, shrinks from her lover and implores the Saints' pardon for her sin. Her prayer is granted and she is allowed to die in the cell just as the time for her execution comes. The opera ends with the soul of Marguerite being borne away to heaven, and Faust, unwillingly, being dragged into the underworld by the triumphant Mephistopheles.



"LA TRAVIATA"

(VERDI)

THIS lovely opera is based on the story of Alexandre Dumas Fils "La Dame Aux Camelias." It opens with a party given by Violetta, in her Paris Salon. Violetta is a very lovely courtesan who is the toast of Paris but who is at the same time a very ill woman. Among the guests at the party is Alfred Germont, who is madly in love with Violetta. He tries his hardest to make her give up her life in Paris and come with him into the country. Having never met a passion as sincere as that of Alfred's she eventually decides to go with him, and the second act finds them established in rural happiness just outside Paris.

There they live in great content until Alfred learns that Violetta is about to sell her city house and her carriage in order to defray expenses, so he departs for Paris to prevent this. While he is away his father visits Violetta to try and persuade her to leave Alfred. He explains to her that she has destroyed the happiness of Alfred's family and what is worse she will ruin all chances of Alfred ever having a career. Because she loves Alfred dearly Violetta decides to give him up and leaves him secretly.

The bitter Alfred can find no possible reason for her desertion of him beyond that of faithlessness and searches throughout Paris for her. He eventually traces her to the house of a friend where Violetta feeling that she has not much longer to live has sought refuge. He comes to a party at the friend's house and publicly insults her there. The cudgels on Violetta's behalf are taken up by her present protector and he challenges Alfred to a duel.

In the last act we find that Violetta has been declining rapidly since that fatal evening when Alfred found her again in Paris. She hears, however, that Alfred was victorious in the duel and a last ray of hope for happiness is offered in a letter from Alfred's father, consenting to allow them to marry and forgive her. Alfred has by this time heard of Violetta's sacrifice and he hurries to her side only to find that even the joy of having him back cannot restore her health. So forgiven and forgiving Violetta dies in his arms and in her last moments of happiness she strives to console her desolate lover with promises that she will always live in his heart.



“ CARMEN ”

(BIZET)

CARMEN is a wanton Spanish Gipsy, whose colourful character combines extreme passion with butterfly fickleness. Though only a worker in a cigarette factory, her dazzling attraction casts a spell over every man who sees her.

Bizet's opera opens in a square in Seville, where the cigarette factory is placed directly opposite the guard-house. At noon-tide the cigarette girls come out for a break, followed by the alluring Carmen. She sings the famous “Habanera” deliberately trying to provoke the attention of Don Jose, Captain of the Guard. For the time being, however, he is indifferent to her irresistible wiles. The girls return to the factory, and while Jose is receiving a letter from Micaela, the girl he originally loves, there is a disturbance within caused by Carmen, who has attempted to kill one of her fellow-workers. She is arrested by Jose's superior officer, Zuniga, and left in charge of the former. Left alone with the voluptuous beauty, Jose is no proof against her charm, and helps her to escape, making an assignation with her at the inn of Liliast Pastias.

In the second act Carmen joins in the revelry of the soldiers, toreadors and smugglers who frequent the inn. While awaiting the arrival of her latest conquest, Don Jose, she exercises her spell over Escamillo, a popular toreador. It is then that he sings the famous Toreador song to his fellow-revellers and departs with Zuniga. On Don Jose's arrival, Carmen hints that he should abandon his duty and join her with the smugglers. While infatuated by her fascination, he hesitates to follow her, proclaiming, nevertheless his undying love. While so doing, Zuniga, who has also fallen in love with Carmen, returns and orders Don Jose back to the Barracks, but

Jose refuses. Encouraged by Jose's defiance the gipsies disarm Zuniga, and they all proceed to the smugglers' cave.

At the smugglers' cave in the mountains we find that Carmen is tiring of Don Jose. While they are fortune-telling, Carmen reads that death is ordained for her first and Don Jose next, and in the facts of inexorable destiny she laughs. Don Jose is left in charge of the cave while the smugglers attempt to cross the frontier. While they are away Escamillo returns for Carmen and is involved in a desperate struggle with Don Jose. They are only separated by the return of the smugglers. Despite the fact that he has almost been worsted in the fray the toreador invites the smugglers to his bull-fight and then departs singing of his love for Carmen, who is attracted into following him, but her way is barred by the unfortunate Don Jose. While with dagger drawn he is threatening Carmen, Micaela, his erstwhile love comes to tell him that he must return to his mother who is dying of grief at his disgrace. For a short time filial duty overcomes his passion for Carmen, and he goes off with Micaela. As the curtain falls the glorious notes of the Toreador song are heard far away in the hills.

In the final act the scene is the entrance to the bull-ring of Seville. An excited crowd mixes in picturesque confusion on the stage, singing the praises of the adored Escamillo. Carmen and Don Jose are among the crowd and Escamillo sees her. He vows his love for her and she promises herself to him if he should be victorious in the bull-ring. Don Jose, maddened with jealousy, will not allow her in to watch the bull-fight and threatens to kill her if she should give herself to Escamillo. Carmen laughs at his persistence and taunts him obviously preferring death to his ardour. As shouts of triumph rise from the ring, acclaiming yet another victory for Escamillo, Don Jose, blinded with fury, stabs her.

The opera closes with Don Jose clasping the lifeless Carmen in his arms and crying to her: "Ah! Carmen loved Carmen, no more shalt thou wake, but I love thee still."



"CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA"

(MASCAGNI)

TURRIDU, a young Sicilian peasant, loved the flighty Lola before he went to war, but during his absence she married the wealthy carrier Alfio, who adores her. When Turridu returns he consoles himself with Santuzza, but it does not take much encouraging from Lola before he is once again flirting with her, despite the fact that she is now a married woman.

The opera opens at the point when Turridu is serenading Lola. Santuzza overhears him and, mad with jealousy, confides in Lucia, Turridu's mother. Santuzza meets Turridu outside the church and reproaches him, but he departs laughingly to meet Lola. Then, unable to bear his faithlessness any longer, Santuzza tells Alfio of Lola's inconstancy and he determines to challenge Turridu.

After church the two men meet in Lucia's tavern and when Alfio refuses to drink with Turridu and then challenges him Sicilian fashion, the latter realises the fatal mistake he has made. The two men then repair to a nearby orchard and having commended the luckless Santuzza to his mother's care, Turridu goes out to his death and the curtain closes on the tragedy.



"I PAGLIACCI"

(LEONCAVALLO)

IN the Prologue to "I Pagliacci" Tonio, the clown, comes before the curtain to remind the audience that often there is deep tragedy behind a farce, and thus they are prepared for the sad end of the lovers in this opera.

Canio is the head of a troupe of wandering actors who come to a small village in Italy where they are rapturously welcomed by the villagers. Having invited the peasants to his play that night Canio retires to the inn to have some wine. While he is away Tonio makes advances to Nedda, the sprightly, coquettish wife of Canio, but she spurns him even to the extent of striking him across the face with a whip. Humiliated beyond endurance the clown swears to have revenge. Nedda then meets Silvio, her lover, with whom she has made plans to run away. Tonio overhears them making their plans and hastens to Canio to tell him of his wife's faithlessness. Canio, who is a morose, jealous man, wishes to seek out the man who has betrayed him immediately, but is restrained by Beppo, the Harlequin.

In the second act the players are prepared to present their play. Villagers collect before the tiny stage, and when the curtain opens Nedda is seen on the stage and the play within the play begins. But with the entrance of Canio as Punchinello, the pretty farce takes on a new note. Forgetting that they are acting before the astonished gaze of the villagers Canio roughly demands the name of her lover from Nedda. But knowing that Silvio is in the audience Nedda carries on with her lines as if nothing untoward has occurred.

Eventually the infuriated Canio stabs Nedda and as she tries to avoid him she inadvertently calls to Silvio for help. The latter leaps on to the stage only to meet the same fate as the hapless Nedda. Meanwhile the audience have been so bewildered by the sudden change from make-believe to realism that they have not been able to help, and so with a final grim gesture of despair Canio wearily dismisses them saying "Go, the comedy is ended," and then they leave him with the body of his dead wife he loved too well.



" RIGOLETTO "

(VERDI)

THE Duke of Mantua is a wild and debauched youth, who is assisted in his dissipated life by Rigoletto, his jester. In the first act Rigoletto is found helping the Duke to win the wife of the Count Ceprano, but her father, Count Monterone, appears in the midst of a feast and curses both Rigoletto and the Duke.

Rigoletto has one vulnerable point in his armour and that is his tender love for his beautiful and pure daughter Gilda. Unknown to Rigoletto, the Duke has been serenading Gilda, and has won her confidence. One night as Rigoletto goes home he finds some of the Duke's men abducting a young woman. Thinking that it is the Countess Ceprano, he gleefully assists them only to find that it is his own daughter.

Gilda is taken to the Duke's palace, where Rigoletto follows her, but she implores him not to take vengeance on the Duke, whom she loves. Rigoletto is not to be put off, and hires one Sparafucile to kill the Duke.

In the last act we find Sparafucile's sister, Maddalena, succumbing to the advances of the Duke, and she begs her brother not to kill him. He consents, and they decide to kill the next passer-by instead, and pretend that it is the Duke's body. Rigoletto has persuaded Gilda to fly from the palace disguised as a man, and she is the next passer-by and is killed. Her body is then placed in a sack and handed to the jester as being that of the Duke. As Rigoletto proceeds to the river to dispose of the body he hears the Duke singing, and realises that a mistake has been made. He hastily tears open the sack to find his dying daughter inside, and with a last frenzied cry remembers that Monterone's awful curse has been fulfilled.

" LA TOSCA "

Opera in 3 acts by Puccini (1858-1924).

Libretto by Illica and Giacosa, based on Sardun's drama.

First produced, Teatro Costanzi, Rome, January 14, 1900.

Time: 1800. Place: Rome.

FLORIA Tosca, singer, and Mario Cavaradossi, painter, love each other. For having helped a political fugitive, Angelotti, Mario falls into the clutches of Baron Scarpia, Chief of Police, who also aspires to Tosca. Tosca, to save Mario from further torture, reveals Angelotti's hiding-place. News is brought of Bonaparte's victory at Marengo, a defeat for Scarpia. Mario exults. Scarpia orders his execution. Mario gone, Tosca pretends to yield to Scarpia, who arranges a pretended mock execution. Tosca wins from Scarpia a safe-conduct for Mario and herself. As Scarpia hands her the paper she stabs him fatally and leaves for Castel Sant' Angelo, where Mario awaits death. Tosca is admitted and instructs Mario how to act during the "mock" execution. But Scarpia has been doubly astute. He had hoped to enjoy Tosca and have his revenge on Mario. He achieves the latter, for the bullets are real. Tosca vainly calls on Mario to rise from a death which she thinks feigned. The murder of Scarpia has been discovered. His agents approach to arrest Tosca. She jumps to death from the castle parapet crying: "Scarpia, we shall meet on high!"



GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN

The Dublin Grand Opera Society

(1941)

Week Commencing 10th November, 1941

MON. & THURS. at 7.30 p.m.
CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA
(Mascagni)

PAGLIACCI
(Leoncavallo)

PATRICIA BLACK JAMES JOHNSTON
SAM MOONEY

KAY LYNCH KITTY VAUGHAN

RENEE FLYNN JOHN TORNEY
JOHN LYNSEY T. E. ATTWOOLL
W. MILLAR

TUESDAY at 7.30 p.m.

RIGOLETTO
(Verdi)

JOHN LYNSEY MOIRA GRIFFITH
JAMES JOHNSTON SAM MOONEY
N. J. LEWIS CATHLEEN O'BYRNE
T. CLARKE EILY WALDRON
JOAN BYROM L. W. KENNEDY
H. SHERIDAN

WEDNESDAY at 7.30 p.m.

LA TOSCA
(Puccini)

MAY DEVITT JOHN TORNEY
SAM MOONEY
JOHN LYNSEY STEPHEN BLACK

FRIDAY at 7.30 p.m.

FAUST (WITH BALLET)
(Gounod)

MAY DEVITT JAMES JOHNSTON
J. C. BROWNER T. E. ATTWOOLL
PATRICIA BLACK
ANN FRAYNE JACK CARROLL

SAT. MATINEE at 2.30 p.m.

LA TRAVIATA
(Verdi)

RENEE FLYNN JAMES JOHNSTON
N. J. LEWIS
W. BRENNAN MARJORIE BARRY
RUBY HUNT G. JONES
J. G. CUTHBERT C. BYROM

SATURDAY at 7.30. p.m.

CARMEN
(Bizet)

PATRICIA BLACK JOHN TORNEY
MAY DEVITT JOHN LYNSEY
N. J. LEWIS S. BLACK W. MILLAR
W. PORTER JOSEPHINE O'HAGAN
CARMEL McASEY

MUSICAL DIRECTOR: CAPT. J. M. DOYLE

GUEST CONDUCTOR: CHARLES LYNCH

FULLY AUGMENTED ORCHESTRA

OPERAS PRODUCED BY EILY MURNAGHAN AND HERBERT BAILEY
CHOREOGRAPHY BY CEPTA CULLEN CHORUS MISTRESS: JULIA GRAY

The
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